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ABSTRACT

"New Horizons in Adult Education" is an electronic journal started in the fall of 1987 by the Syracuse University Kellogg Project. In the spring of 1989, the project surveyed readers of New Horizons to find out how they were reacting to the journal and its method of transmission. Data were collected by sending the survey electronically to members of a computer network who receive the journal (155, with a 17 percent response), and descriptive statistics were computed for all variables, including the responses to several open-ended survey questions. Survey respondents were asked to rate the journal on variety of articles, quality of articles, ease of receipt, and relevance of the journal to the individual's interests in adult education. Respondents rated all of these variables "good" or "very good," with ease of receipt ranked highest and relevance ranked lowest--almost "good" rather than "very good." The study concluded that publishing electronic journals offers the possibility of generating a dynamic construction of knowledge that is exciting. Yet it also creates social consequences, such as limiting access for people without the financial means to use electronic networks. (KC)

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Syracuse University Kellogg Project

Technical Report Series

THE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL: PROMISES AND PREDICAMENTS

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Technical Report No. 3

February 1990

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ABSTRACT

This report examines the process, nature, and results of disseminating knowledge via computer networks. It focuses on a particular instance of such dissemination: an electronic journal called *New Horizons in Adult Education*, which was initiated in the fall of 1987 by the Syracuse University Kellogg Project. In the spring of 1989, the project surveyed readers of *New Horizons* to find out how they were reacting to the journal and its method of transmission. Data were collected by sending the survey electronically to members of a computer network who receive the journal, and descriptive statistics were computed for all variables, including the responses to the several open-ended survey questions. The results of this exploratory research are summarized in this report. It is hoped that an awareness of the increased possibilities for communication and collegiality among adult educators and a more complete understanding of the social and technical issues embedded within the electronic journal and its technology will lead to an expanded, international dialogue within the field of adult education.

THE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL: PROMISES AND PREDICAMENTS

Michael Ehringhaus

INTRODUCTION

The scholarly journal has become a traditional means of disseminating the thinking and knowledge within an academic field. Each discipline disseminates its knowledge through journals that publish field-specific research and writing. These journals provide a voice for the field, an internal dialogue.

The journal, too, provides a means for codifying the current thinking of an academic field into the accepted knowledge of that field--to be challenged and, ultimately, reinforced or rejected. An underlying assumption is that Truth--or for the social sciences, an understanding of human variety--exists and can be obtained through reason and orderly inquiry (Mills, 1959). "The purpose of the social sciences is not to judge the goodness or badness of phenomena but to describe them in ways that add to our understanding of the world and our ability to predict and influence change" (Perrolle, 1987, p. xviii). The journal, then, serves as one avenue for the expression of that purpose.

How does the nature of the journal change when it is transmitted electronically, via computer? To better understand the process, nature, and results of disseminating knowledge through an electronic journal, the editors of *New Horizons in Adult Education* surveyed the Journal's readers. The results of the survey, while pointing to some of the promises of the electronic journal and its medium of dissemination, indicate some of the underlying predicaments in electronic publication.

ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

With the onset of electronic journals, the process of knowledge creation and dissemination will undergo expansion and change. Burstyn (1989), chief organizer of a conference held at Syracuse University ("The Impact of Desktop Publishing on University Life"), says that the new technology will "have a democratizing effect, permitting scholars at smaller institutions and those with ideas outside the mainstream of a given discipline to participate more in scholarly discourse" (p. A16). Electronic publishing offers both speed and the ability to keep information up-to-date (Perrolle,

1987). For academe, the electronic journal can provide a means for disseminating research and facilitating dialogue among colleagues.

Nevertheless, electronic publishing faces a lengthy battle for acceptance and recognition within the world of academe (DeLoughry, 1989). Persuading professional societies, university tenure and promotion committees, editors, and scholars to accept the idea of electronic journals will be a difficult, arduous trek, according to Green and Silverman (cited in DeLoughry, 1989).

> The current mixed review of computer-mediated communication by the academic community is symbolic: symbolic of the tensions between old and new paradigms in scholarly enterprise--especially reporting. Without question, they also reflect the onset of a permanent change that telecommunications is making in the way we represent and express our world and our learning. (Kerr, Lambert, & Robertson, 1989)

BENEFITS OF ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION

Electronic communication is a fast and easy means of dialogue, connecting diverse people in different locations. The increased collegiality made possible through such expanded communication may have striking implications for a field. Silverman (cited in DeLoughry, 1989), for example, says that journal subscribers who are connected to an electronic network are more likely to comment on articles. He also noted that researchers in an experiment focused on *Computer Human Factors*, a British electronic journal published since the early 1980s, found that readers and authors communicated informally for a total of 684 hours on the computer network after the papers had been published. If we assume that knowledge is communal, its production may well be enhanced through the use of electronic networks.

What effect can electronic publishing have on the process of reviewing articles for refereed journals? Green (cited in DeLoughry, 1989) observes that many scholars use electronic networks to circulate drafts of articles to others for comments and review. The impact of this on the review and publication of articles would highlight "a transformation of peer review and dissemination from a static to a dynamic activity, with more opportunity and some risk for those engaging in it, and with a better outcome" (p. A11). The opportunity and risk would be the result of increased exposure to more people, individuals who might be more apt to respond to the substance of an

article over a computer network (DeLoughry, 1989). The final product, though, has the potential to be enhanced by this more "communal" construction of knowledge.

Unlike their paper counterparts, electronic journals need not be limited to a certain number of pages to contain publication costs. However, cost is not the only issue when deciding how long an electronic journal should be. In comparing two recently established electronic journals, Kerr, Lambert, and Robertson (1989) argue that lengthy electronic files do not take advantage of the medium nor address the difficulty of reading the electronic screen; they are simply electronic versions of paper journals, meant to be printed out and read. However, lengthy electronic journals, while perhaps more difficult to read than paper journals, could very well be taking advantage of the technology in other ways: broadening the avenues of dialogue and dissemination of knowledge. If screen readability is a defining aspect of an electronic journal, then it, too, becomes a defining aspect of the journal's content and substance; limiting an article in length to a certain number of screens might have an impact on how authors are able to address a particular subject.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Communication technology promises many things to many people. For academe, the technology offers potential for disseminating research and facilitating dialogue among colleagues. This exploratory study represents an attempt to gain a better understanding of the electronic journal by allowing the readers of one journal, *New Horizons in Adult Education*, to tell us (a) their perceptions of the Journal, (b) whether they cite and/or discuss the Journal with colleagues, (c) how they receive the Journal in a technical sense, (d) their suggestions for improving the Journal, and (e) how receiving the Journal has affected their knowledge of computing.

THE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL

The Beginning

The Syracuse University Kellogg Project began in 1986 with a mission to provide broader access to the university's adult education materials and to facilitate the exchange of information and learning using the very latest technologies where possible. In the fall of 1987 the Project initiated an electronic journal, *New Horizons in Adult Education*. The electronic journal, as initially conceived, was to (a) provide a

means for disseminating, via computer, current thinking within the field of adult education; (b) develop new avenues for connecting adult educators worldwide; and (c) generate dialogue among researchers and practitioners. The Project hired a graduate student in adult education to start the journal.

Establishing Publication Procedures

It was decided from the outset that the journal would be student run. However, the graduate student hired as editor of the journal decided what students to include from where and also established publication procedures. Editorial decisions have been made via electronic mail (E-mail) between the editor (who later became co-editor with another Syracuse University graduate student) and members of the editorial board. The board is comprised of interested graduate students from across the United States and Canada who have access to BITNET, an electronic network used by universities throughout the world.

The review process for *New Horizons* is like that of most traditional journals: The editors receive submissions and send them out for review; the editorial board members then return their comments and evaluations to the editors. However, *New Horizons* differs from other journals in that articles are transmitted electronically between the Syracuse editors and the editorial board members. Each reviewer receives an electronic copy of the article under consideration, then fills out and returns an electronic review form. Because of the need to accommodate board members' widely varying computer systems--each with its own set of commands and requirements--development of the review procedures took several months.

One advantage of the electronic review process is speed. Articles and reviews can be received within seconds of being sent. A disadvantage, on the other hand, is that board members, to take advantage of the medium, must have a fairly sophisticated knowledge of their mainframe computer and how to manipulate lengthy electronic files. However, many *New Horizons* board members who started out with limited technical skills acquired them as they participated. All board members have mainframe computer accounts and regularly communicate via E-mail with the editors. E-mail has been used to exchange information about technical problems, set up editorial board meetings at national conferences, discuss various topics, get feedback on the Journal, and survey the board for their views concerning the operation, management, and substance of *New Horizons*. All Journal procedures have resulted from such electronic communication between the board and the editors.

Becoming Known

Knowledge about *New Horizons in Adult Education* is limited, for the most part, to those with access to its medium. Yet, with the publication of each issue, both inquiries about the Journal and the number of articles submitted have increased dramatically. To date, *New Horizons* has received articles from the following countries: Canada, Syria, Tanzania, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, the United States, New Zealand, and Sweden. Articles have come in a variety of formats, including computer disks, paper copy, and FAX. Authors have been adult education professors, students, and practitioners.

When this survey was conducted, three issues of the journal had been published. They included articles on topics such as adult development, propaganda and adult education, feminist research methodology, women and literacy in Tanzania, physical learning environments, adult education in Nicaragua, and the Carnegie Corporation's early involvement in adult education.

New Horizons in Adult Education is distributed, free of charge, through the Adult Education Network (AEDNET), an international group of adult educators who communicate via BITNET. AEDNET is sponsored by the Syracuse University Kellogg Project and includes individuals from five continents. Because of the journal's increasing visibility within the field, many people have signed up for AEDNET in order to receive the Journal. Although it is difficult to assess the Journal's impact on AEDNET subscribers, it is obvious from the volume of AEDNET-related correspondence concerning the Journal that more and more people are interested in reading and publishing in *New Horizons*.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The population for this study consisted of the spring 1989 subscribers (N=155) to the Adult Education Network.

Survey Development and Data Collection

Informal, semistructured interviews were conducted with several adult educators at Syracuse University to generate information, from the reader's point of view, about possible issues and problems in receiving and reading *New Horizons in Adult Education*. The results of those interviews were coded and put into a pilot survey, which was then electronically distributed to the adult education faculty within the Department of Adult and Administrative Studies at Syracuse University and to all staff within the Kellogg Project. The Syracuse-based editors of *New Horizons* asked respondents to the pilot survey to critique the instrument by offering suggestions regarding form and content. The final readership survey, which reflects the respondents' suggestions, was distributed electronically, along with an explanatory letter, to the 155 AEDNET subscribers.

The survey response rate was 17%. Several reasons for this low response rate can be posited. It could have been because some AEDNET readers (a) had system-related, technical problems receiving or responding to the survey; (b) lacked the technical know-how to receive or respond to the survey; or (c) may not have received the survey--there was no request for acknowledgement upon receipt of the survey.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and entered as a SAS data set. Because the total number of respondents was low (N=27), data analysis was limited to descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were computed for all variables, including responses to the several open-ended survey questions.

FINDINGS

Description of Respondents

Table 1 presents an overview of the respondents to the readership survey.

Table 1
Survey Respondents (N=27)

Category	Item	%
Role	Professors	51
	Students	37
	Practitioners	4
	Student/Professor	
	Student/Practitioner	4
Sex	Male	74
	Female	26
Age range	Under 30	4
	30-39 years old	27
	40-49 years old	46
	50-59 years old	15
	60+ years old	8

Reader Perceptions of *New Horizons*

The survey respondents were asked to use a 4-point scale to rate the Journal on four items: (a) variety of articles, (b) quality of articles, (c) ease of receiving the Journal, and (d) the relevance of the Journal to the individual's interests in adult education. Table 2 presents the overall results of the respondents' perceptions of *New Horizons*, and Table 3 presents reader perceptions of the Journal by role and sex.

Table 2
Overall Reader Perceptions[1]

Item	Mean
Ease of receiving Journal	1.50
Variety of articles	1.59
Quality of articles	1.82
Relevance of Journal to interests	1.98

Table 3
Reader Perceptions by Role and Sex

	Means			
Role	Variety	Quality	Ease	Relevance
Student	1.50	1.86	1.29	1.64
Professor	1.54	1.75	1.58	2.27
Male	1.65	1.81	1.44	2.06
Female	1.42	1.83	1.67	1.70

Impact within the Field

"Impact" is a tenuous construct, especially in terms of measurement, and it implies causality. In developing the survey instrument, however, the researcher recognized the impossibility of reaching any substantial conclusions about the Journal's impact within the field. Instead, the survey was designed to measure two related aspects of impact: (a) whether readers were citing the Journal and its articles and (b) whether or not the Journal had generated conversation among colleagues.

[1]Reader Rating of Journal:
1 = VERY GOOD
2 = GOOD
3 = POOR
4 = VERY POOR

Of those who responded to the survey question concerning citation (81%), 32% had cited the Journal. When asked where respondents had made reference to *New Horizons*, five places were mentioned: (a) in university classes, (b) in a forthcoming book, (c) in various newsletters, (d) in an article, and (e) in a class paper.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents answered the question concerning whether or not *New Horizons* had generated conversation among colleagues. Of that 81% who answered the question, 82% stated that the Journal had been a topic of conversation. When asked to comment on the nature of the conversations and remarks, responses included the following: the quality and scope of the Journal, the innovative nature of the Journal, article submission, how the Journal "sparked" several "good" discussions (e.g., on acceptance of an electronic Journal within the field, the United States impact on the field, paper journals versus electronic journals), the Journal's value for the students involved, the fact that the Journal is student run, and technical problems relating to reading and receiving the Journal.

Receiving, Reading, and Passing the Journal to Others

Thirty-six percent of the respondents reported experiencing technical problems in the process of receiving the Journal. Problems included receiving truncated versions of the Journal and having technical difficulties receiving, manipulating, and printing lengthy electronic mail.

All but one of the respondents reported that they read *New Horizons*. Table 4, while not directly addressing the issue of how people read the Journal, provides some indication as to what the respondents do with the Journal once they receive it. From this their reading patterns can be inferred.

Table 4
Reader Handling of New Horizons

Item	%
Scrolls through the Journal on screen	29
Prints paper copy of the Journal	85

Just as how people read an electronic Journal provides some data on both the medium and the Journal, whether or not people pass electronic and paper versions of the Journal to others may give some indications of (a) how knowledge moves within the field, (b) the field's acceptance of a Journal distributed in an alternative manner, and (c) how the technical aspects of delivery may or may not affect readers' views of and use of an electronic Journal. Table 5 presents data on passing *New Horizons* to others.

Table 5
Passing Copies of New Horizons to Others

Item	%
Passes electronic copies to others	29%
Passes paper copies to others	54%

Reader Suggestions for Journal Format and Content

New Horizons in Adult Education, unlike established paper journals in the field, has changed its format with each issue. This ongoing process of change reflects the Journal's youth and, at the same time, its attempt to adapt to both the medium and to emerging reader expectations and author submissions. The survey, accordingly, was designed to solicit readers' suggestions concerning both the format and the content of the Journal. Tables 6 and 7 outline those suggestions.

Table 6
Journal Contents

The Journal should include	Positive response
Book reviews	91%
Letters to the editor	59%
Point-counterpoint	59%
Invitational columns	55%

Table 7
Authorship

The Journal should	Positive response
Publish articles only by students	4%
Publish articles by students & professors	88%
Publish articles by practitioners	75%

Reader Suggestions for Ways to Improve *New Horizons* and Increase Ownership within the Field

One of the purposes of the readership survey was to ask respondents for suggestions on ways to improve the Journal. Although the concept of improvement is relative and is tethered to individual preferences, the researcher wanted to collect the opinions as a source of ideas for change in future issues of the Journal. Another purpose of the survey was to ask readers for ideas about how to increase a feeling of ownership of the Journal within the field. To collect as broad an array of responses as possible, survey respondents were asked open-ended questions. Table 8 represents respondents' suggestions for ways to improve the Journal, and Table 9 lists suggestions for ways to increase the ownership within the field.

Table 8
Ways to Improve the Journal

Response	%
No response	33
Make the Journal interactive	24
Increase variety of features/content	22
Take advantage of the technology	17
Provide publication/policy statement	12
Work on quality	11
Expand the variety of articles	11
Make Journal accessible to nonmainframe users	6

Publish more often	6
Involve more people	6
Market the Journal	6
Pass the editorship around	6
Set up regular publishing schedule	6
Help the end-user with technical problems	6
Develop the Journal's own style	6

Table 9
Ways to Increase Ownership within the Field

Response	%
No response	48
Include in Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)	21
Make hard copies available	14
Increase the publicity	14
Provide free copies to libraries	14
Pass editorship on to other universities	14
Survey the field for "hot" topics	14
Provide paper copies/disk copies	14
Get subscribers to recruit others	7
Do workshops at conferences	7
Provide university credit for working with the Journal	7
Use editorial board for decisions about Journal	7
Archive the Journal	7
Include in *Psych Abstracts*	7

Learning about Computers as the Result of Receiving and Reading *New Horizons*

Computer-mediated communication is an idiosyncratic venture. Every system has its own protocol for sending and receiving messages. One of the difficulties, therefore, in designing an electronic journal is deciding how to design and transmit the journal to

accommodate the various international mainframe systems. However, technical problems may also result when a user lacks the knowledge and skills needed to manipulate lengthy electronic files.

The process of receiving, managing, storing, reading, manipulating, and printing lengthy electronic files requires detailed knowledge of one's particular mainframe system. To assess incidental learning, respondents were asked whether or not they had learned more about the use of computers as a result of receiving and reading *New Horizons*. Of the 70% who responded to the question, 53% stated that they had learned something.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND QUESTIONS

Limitations

Although the entire AEDNET population was surveyed, the respondents may very well have formed a select subgroup. Obviously, those who didn't receive the survey could not respond to the survey. There might also be a positive response bias in that those who bothered to complete the survey are likely the ones who care more about the Journal. In addition, a survey such as this one--one that requires technical savvy to complete--has an intrinsic response bias built into it: To receive, manipulate, and respond to the survey assumes a certain level of technical know-how. Responses to questions concerning the ease of receiving the Journal or whether or not people experience technical difficulties in receiving the Journal are inherently biased by the technology of transmission of the survey. It can be assumed that those who responded to the survey possess the technical skills necessary to effectively handle electronic transmission. Given these limitations, the respondents are unlikely to represent AEDNET subscribers as a whole. Caution, therefore, should be taken in generalizing from or interpreting the data.

Technical Issues and Problems

The technical issue can be broken into two categories: (a) mainframe, system-specific issues and (b) readers' technical knowledge. When *New Horizons* exits the Syracuse University mainframe bound for the individual AEDNET reader's mainframe, the text is in ASCII, a computer language that can be read by diverse computer systems. Yet, the process that each reader must go through to receive the Journal,

manipulate the file, then scroll through and/or print a copy of the Journal, entails a variety of steps, each dependant on the requirements of that individual's mainframe. For the process to proceed successfully, the reader of any electronic matter must know the exact procedures or steps required by the mainframe. The electronic environment is unforgiving in that it does not tolerate command approximations.

The survey data did indicate, however, that respondents do experience technical problems. Whether or not a person scrolls through the Journal on a computer screen, prints out paper copies, passes electronic versions of the Journal on to others, passes paper copies to others, or, ultimately, reads the Journal at all, depends very much on the individual's technical skills.

One suggestion for ways to improve the Journal was for the editorial staff at Syracuse University to provide help for end-users who experience technical problems. However, the internal mainframe commands required to handle electronic files differ from system to system. To what extent, then, is providing help possible? An interesting prospect would be to build into the structure and content of the Journal a deliberate facilitation of the learning that is apparently already occurring as the result of receiving the Journal. The prospect of disseminating a Journal that not only publishes the knowledge of a field but, at the same time, encourages and facilitates technological learning is an intriguing one.

Acceptance and Ownership within the Field

Of the people (78%) who responded to the question whether *New Horizons* should remain a refereed Journal, 91% stated that *New Horizons* should remain a refereed publication. One can only speculate about what this means. A refereed journal has more status within the field, so acceptance of a new journal might depend, to some degree, on whether or not it maintains some form of quality--usually a peer-review process for articles. Within the university environment, the location of the primary readership of *New Horizons,* publishing in a nonrefereed journal is not as likely to count towards tenure and promotion.

Another issue that might affect acceptance is authorship: Whose articles does the Journal publish? Initially, *New Horizons* was designed to publish only works written by students, but after advertising the Journal, the editors began to receive articles from practitioners and professors. The first issue, for example, published an article by a regional director of adult education in Nicaragua. He was not a student, but the editorial board decided to publish the piece because of its timeliness and relevance to

adult literacy. But with the publication of that first article, the editors began to rethink the issue of authorship: It did not make much sense to limit the Journal to the publication of student articles, especially if the field's acceptance of the Journal was a desired goal. A broad-based authorship, it was thought, would enhance the nature of the Journal's substance. The readership survey supported that decision: 96% of those who responded to the question concerning who should be allowed to publish in *New Horizons* said that the Journal should not publish only articles written by students.

The fact that the *New Horizons* is run by graduate students is another issue associated with acceptance. Does publication in a student run journal carry the weight of publishing in a journal run by an established group of recognized people in a particular field? Although the *Harvard Education Review* is managed by doctoral students, the Journal does, in fact, have an exclusive reputation, thus carrying a certain amount of prestige. Is this because of its Ivy League, institutional association? Is it because of the Journal's longevity? Or is it because of a confounding combination of many things? Within any field, however, the status of graduate students is somewhat marginal, so a student run venture has to overcome certain built-in biases associated with that status. The issue of student management vs. management by recognized leaders is one that confronts *New Horizons* as it attempts to establish itself within the field of adult education.

One outcome of the readership survey was the suggestion that the editorship of the Journal rotate to other universities as a means for improving the Journal and increasing its ownership within the field. At this point, *New Horizons* is the property and product of the Syracuse University Kellogg Project; its editors are graduate students at the University and they manage all aspects of the Journal's development from the offices within the Project. Yet, what does this say about the field's ownership? Is it possible to introduce the field to another journal--especially one that uses an alternative means for distribution and reading--and expect acceptance if the editorship is not rotated? If the Journal is to have a future, this question will have to be addressed.

Perhaps the most pervasive aspect of acceptance is accessibility: Who is able to receive and read an electronic journal? The respondents to the readership survey suggested several ways to make the Journal more accessible to both mainframe users and to nonusers. Underlying these suggestions is the assumption that the Journal doesn't exist solely *for* the electronic medium: Knowledge is communal, so distribution can and should happen in a variety of ways. Acceptance, then, depends to some degree on the ability of people to reach the contents of the Journal.

Electronic Journal Access and Publication

Access--both access to a mainframe and possession of the technical skills needed to make use of it--is a problem and a concern for readers of *New Horizons*. Network access is not pervasive throughout the world, nor within institutions that house adult education departments. For example, some readers of *New Horizons* have to share computer accounts with colleagues, while other readers find it next to impossible to gain the institutional support (both technical and training) they need to interact with AEDNET in general or with *New Horizons* in particular. Any publication distributed via an electronic network is limited in its readership to those who have the means to "log on" to the system. Clearly, given the cost of the medium, electronic access is confined to those with the necessary resources (financial, material, and knowledge).

Although *New Horizons* is transmitted via computer, access to the Journal does not necessarily have to be limited to electronic networks. As the respondents to the survey indicated, the Journal could be placed in ERIC and other nonelectronic databases. In addition, the Journal could be stored on a variety of computer disk formats as an ASCII file and distributed at a nominal cost to interested individuals, libraries, and universities. Paper copies could also be distributed at a charge, to cover production costs.

Another issue with publication in an electronic journal involves the youth of, and perceptions about, the medium. Electronic journals have a very brief history, so acceptance in academe is problematic at this point. Accordingly, electronic journals face the problem of getting people to submit their work; tenure and promotion committees vary from college to college in their attitudes towards electronic journals. Many people, therefore, might hesitate to submit an article to an electronic journal because the publication may not have the status of something published in an established, paper journal. The gatekeepers of academe--the promotion and tenure committees--will have to expand their notions of legitimate journals to include electronic publications if acceptance is ever to occur.

CONCLUSION

The fact that the electronic journal--via increased, ongoing dialogue--offers the possibility of generating a dynamic construction of knowledge is, in and of itself, exciting. As yet, there is little evidence to suggest that this is actually happening on any large scale. Further research on electronic dialogue could provide us with a better understanding of how people communicate electronically, who communicates electronically, the nature of that communication, and the effects of electronic dialogue on knowledge building and dissemination.

While "democratization" of knowledge and increased collegiality are suggested outcomes of electronic journals, the financial reality of electronic communication, alone, poses substantial problems of access. At this point, it is simply not financially possible for many people to gain access to electronic networks. What, then, are social consequences of this restriction of access?

> Information technology has the capacity to concentrate political power, to create new forms of social obfuscation and domination. The less prepared we feel to question the uses to which it is put, the more certain we are to suffer those liabilities. (Roszak, 1986)

The technology has some clear benefits:

> Yet, if we allow our enthusiasm for technology to obscure our judgement of its consequences, we will restrict our capacity to make informed choices about the use of that technology. If we look only at the social benefits, we will fail to assess social costs. (Perrolle, 1987, pp. xviii, xix)

And there are, indeed, social costs. The results of this change in the technology of production and publishing are mixed (Wallace, 1985). In Sweden, for example, the printer's labor union is not only involved in planning the future of electronic publishing, but union members expect to enhance their skills and gain new responsibilities in the workplace (Howard, 1985). In Britain, on the other hand, Rupert Murdoch, the newspaper publisher, fired his printers and replaced them with electronic publishing (*Fortune,* March 3, 1986, p. 8, as cited in Perrolle, 1987). Use of the new technology affects individuals within society and has profound implications for society at large.

The electronic journal is a technological neonate full of the possibilities and promises of youth. Yet, with those promises come predicaments. Just as the electronic journal may be the solution to one set of problems, it might, too, be part of the genesis of others. What is most important is that we don't, in our acceptance of the new technology, lose the capacity to "think through the social and ethical questions that confront us as we pass through the latest stage of the ongoing industrial revolution" (Roszak, 1986).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AEDNET: Adult Education Network. AEDNET is a listserv address on BITNET that functions as a subscription list of users, who receive mass electronic mail distributions. All participants can receive a copy of each message.

BITNET: BITNET is an electronic network of interconnected mainframe computers scattered throughout five continents. Individuals can send and receive information via BITNET when their personal computers are connected to one of these mainframes. (BITNET stands for Because It's Time Network).

Computer disk: A medium for the storage of data.

Computer-mediated communication: Communication that takes place via a system of interconnected computers.

Computer network: A system of interconnected computers enabling information to be sent from and received by these computers. (Same as electronic network.)

Desktop publishing: The process of generating publishable, or camera-ready, documents using electronic layout software on a personal computer. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with "electronic publishing" (see below).

Electronic files: The electronic equivalent of any kind of file or collection of data.

Electronic journal: The electronic counterpart of a traditional journal in which articles are available on-line to subscribers. In some electronic journals, articles are "published," or disseminated, by the authors themselves. In others, an editor or mediator receives the articles first, possibly screens or edits them, then disseminates them to the group. In a refereed electronic journal, articles are reviewed before being disseminated by the editors.

Electronic mail: E-mail for short. A computer-mediated form of telecommunication that enables messages to be exchanged asynchronously, i.e., sending and receiving need not happen simultaneously as it must with a telephone.

Electronic network: See computer network.

Electronic publishing: The dissemination of articles or other information pieces via computer (see electronic journal).

Electronic screen: A computer-monitor screen on which data is displayed.

FAX: Short for facsimile, a technology whereby text or graphic images on a piece of paper are digitized, or read, translated into a code that is transmitted over telephone lines, and finally reassembled on the receiving end as the images are printed out on another piece of paper.

Mainframe computer: A computer with enormous storage capacity that can handle multiple tasks simultaneously. A personal computer user must have a mainframe account (that is, a user's computer must be connected to a mainframe) in order to access a computer network like BITNET.

On-line: One is on-line when one is working on a computer. Data is on-line when it is accessible via computer.

SAS: Statistical Analysis System, a software program used to analyze data.

Telecommunication: Communication that takes place over some distance, especially via telephone and television.

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